STATE OF CONNECTICUT · COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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First Selectman

PETER J. CHARTER
Deputy First Selectman

LAURIE E. BURSTEIN
ANN L. HARFORD
A. LEO MILLER, JR.
JAMES M. PRICHARD
JOHN W. TURNER

SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Tuesday, August 25, 2009
Town Hall - Meeting Hall

SELECTMEN PRESENT: Peter Charter, Laurie Burstein, Ann Harford, A. Leo Miller, James Prichard, Michael Stupinski and John Turner

OTHERS PRESENT: Town Planner: Robert Phillips and Residents: Larry and Dianne Manion

I. Call to Order:

First Selectman Stupinski called the meeting of the Board of Selectmen [BOS] to order at 7:35 p.m.

II. Board of Finance Request to Reconsider Additional Appropriation of $151,482 for Feasibility Study for Town's Acquisition of Ellington Airport – Reimbursable through Federal/State Grant Award.

Mr. Stupinski reviewed the vote on the motion that was made on August 17, 2009 by the BOS relating to the above-noted appropriation. Three Selectmen were opposed and two were in favor, with one abstention, and the motion failed.

The above-noted item was addressed by the Board of Finance [BOF] at their meeting of August 18, 2009. The BOF felt that the Town should take advantage of government funding for the feasibility study and requested that the BOS reconsider the additional appropriation.

Mr. Stupinski stated that the BOS will need to discuss and vote on appropriating the funds needed to conduct the feasibility study which will be reimbursed through a federal grant. The town's cost for the study would be $1,918 which is included in the Economic Development Commission's [EDC] 2009-10 budget. The study will determine whether it makes sense, at any level, for the Town to purchase Ellington Airport. The Town would not be committing to anything at this point. This subject has come up in the past and there are many questions to be answered. This study will provide the answers needed for the BOS to make a well-informed decision.

Mr. Turner asked if the $1,918 cost to the town was anticipated by EDC.

Mr. Phillips stated that each of the land use commissions includes $5,000 in their budget in the event it is needed for contracted services. It was the intention of EDC that the funds come out of that line item in their budget.

Mr. Miller was concerned about the methods to be used to determine noise levels. Mr. Miller stated that he attended an EDC workshop regarding the feasibility study. A consultant at that time stated that the maximum level of noise is measured on an *average* of noise levels. Mr. Miller stated that, based on past complaints, people are more concerned about maximum levels of noise, not average levels.

Mr. Phillips said he did some research as to methods used to determine noise levels. There are different criteria and variables used to measure noise levels. In addition to the SEL [Sound Exposure Level] and DNL [Day-Night Average Noise Level], as noted in the scope of work, the INM [Integrated Noise Model] is the primary tool that is used for analyzing and evaluating noise impacts at airports and is required by the FAA. The INM can calculate sound levels at any specified point so that noise exposure at representative locations around an airport can be obtained.

Mr. Miller stated that in the past the runway approach had been changed to reduce noise levels. According to the scope of work, runway alternatives will be considered and there could be a shift of the runway. Any change in the current runway approach may cause noise levels to be an issue again for residents.

Mr. Manion asked if it would be profitable to the Town to purchase the airport.

Mr. Stupinski stated that the purpose of the study is to determine whether or not it would be profitable for the Town.

Mr. Manion felt that $151,482 was a lot of money to be spending at the tax payers' expense. Even though the town's cost is $1,918, the grant money is still being paid through tax dollars.

Mr. Stupinski stated that the reason the federal government is offering grant money for this type of study is an attempt to preserve smaller airports. The larger airports are becoming more and more congested. It would be prudent to maintain the smaller airports. As the smaller, privately owned airports are finding it more difficult to stay in business, this study will determine whether Town ownership would be a good option to retain the airport. If it makes sense, then we will consider it. We cannot make any determination until we get the facts.

Mr. Charter added that the federal grant money would go somewhere else, if the Town did not accept it. This is a good opportunity for the Town to see whether or not it would be profitable for the Town to purchase the airport.

Mr. Phillips stated that it is the EDC's view that the airport is an asset to the Town. It is something worth saving in some way.

MOVED (CHARTER), SECONDED (HARFORD) AND PASSED [BURSTEIN, CHARTER, HARFORD AND TURNER VOTED – AYE] THAT THE RESOLUTION RELATING TO THE RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD OF FINANCE OF AN ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION OF $151,482, FULLY REIMBURSABLE THROUGH A GRANT, FOR A FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR THE TOWN'S POTENTIAL ACQUISITION OF ELLINGTON AIRPORT, ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN ON AUGUST 17, 2009 BE RESCINDED. [PRICHARD VOTED – NAY; MILLER – ABSTAINED].

MOVED (CHARTER), SECONDED (HARFORD) AND PASSED [BURSTEIN, CHARTER, HARFORD AND TURNER VOTED – AYE] TO RECOMMEND TO THE BOARD OF FINANCE AN ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION OF $151,482, FULLY REIMBURSABLE THROUGH A GRANT OFFER FROM THE US DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION AND THE STATE OF CT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, FOR A FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR THE TOWN'S POTENTIAL ACQUISITION OF ELLINGTON AIRPORT. FURTHER, TO AUTHORIZE THE FIRST SELECTMAN TO EXECUTE THE GRANT OFFER, PENDING THE BOARD OF FINANCE APPROVAL OF THE ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION. [PRICHARD VOTED – NAY; MILLER – ABSTAINED].

III. Adjournment:

MOVED (CHARTER), SECONDED (HARFORD) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN AT P.M.

Submitted by Carol York
Carol York

Approved by
Michael P. Stupinski

Ellington Airport Feasibility Study
Final Scope of Work

II

The Scope involves a comprehensive inspection and evaluation of the Ellington Airport, an assessment of capital projects and costs, a financial feasibility analysis of owning and operating the airport, and evaluation of redeveloping the airport for commercial activities, and an open public outreach component. The study findings will allow the Town to make an informed decision regarding the potential acquisition and operation of the Airport.

The Scope of Work consists of the following tasks:

- Airport Inspection and Environmental Review
- Airport Development Evaluation
- Airport Capital Improvement Plan
- Financial Feasibility Analysis of Airport Ownership
- Airport Economic Impact Assessment
- Preliminary Airport Redevelopment Analysis
- Management/Ownership Options
- Recommendation and Implementation Plan
- Public Outreach and Coordination

When possible, the most recent data from official sources (i.e., ConnDOT, FAA) will be used in the study.

Task 1 – Airport Inspection & Environmental Review

This task will include a physical inspection of the airfield and airport buildings, evaluation of the Airport's compliance with FAA design standards, review of existing environmental documentation, and preparation of a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA). The findings of this task will be incorporated into the study report.

Subtask 1.1 – Inspection of Airfield Facilities
An airport pavement engineer will visually inspect the runway, taxiway, and apron pavement to determine the anticipated design life, approximate rehabilitation cost, and likely timeframe of rehabilitation. The inspection will consist of a field walkover and will include airport vehicle access roads and parking areas. The project team will also obtain and review existing airport property boundary information.

Subtask 1.2 – FAA Design Standards Review & Site Analysis
Privately developed airports do not receive FAA funding and are therefore not developed to FAA's and Connecticut's stringent design standards and regulations. If acquired by the Town, the FAA and ConnDOT will require the Airport to be upgraded over time to satisfy these design standards.

The project team will identify the appropriate Airport Reference Code (ARC) for the Ellington Airport, which is anticipated to be ARC B-I for small aircraft exclusively (i.e., aircraft less than 12,500 pounds).

The project team will identify the status of the Airport's compliance with current FAA design standards included in FAA Advisory Circular 150/5300-13, Airport Design, for the identified ARC. The review will include the following design standards:

- Runway Safety Area (RSA)
- Taxiway Safety Area (TSA)
- Runway Object Free Area (ROFA)
- Taxiway Object Free Area (TOFA)
- Taxilane Object Free Area
- Runway Protection Zone (RPZ)
- Aircraft Parking Offset (from runway, taxiways, and taxilanes)
- Runway-Taxiway Offset
- Airfield Signage and Markings
- Parachuting Regulations for a Jump Center (CT State Reg. Sec. 15-41-42d)

The project team will supplement the findings of the on site inspection with a review of digital aerial imagery. Currently, the Ellington Airport does not satisfy all ARC B-I requirements. Thus, the project team will identify potential airport upgrades to meet FAA standards.

Subtask 1.3 – Structural Review
A structural engineer will perform a visual assessment of the airport buildings and landside facilities. The engineer will identify any visual deterioration, determine the likelihood for continued use of the structures/facilities, and prepare planning level estimates for refurbishment costs (if necessary).

Subtask 1.4 – Environmental Review
This subtask will involve a preliminary review of ~~the existing environmental conditions~~ at the Airport. The project team will rely on existing published documents, including federal and environmental mapping, existing wetland and stormwater permits, local zoning and land use maps, and available environmental studies.

Subtask 1.5 – Phase I Environmental Site Assessment
The project team will conduct a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA). The ESA will identify the potential for environmental liabilities (e.g., hazardous waste) associated with the airport site. The ESA will be performed in accordance with ASTM E 1527-00 (Standard Practice for Environmental Site Assessments: Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Process). The effort will consist of a records review, site reconnaissance, and interviews with the airport owner, operators, and key tenants. Note that completion of this subtask will require access to airport buildings and personnel.

The results of Task 1 will be summarized in study report format, with the details of each technical evaluation provided in a separate appendix. This report organization enables Town officials, agencies, and the general public to quickly review the inspection and assessment findings, while still providing the detailed engineering and environmental findings for those interested in closer inspection and discussion.

Task 2 – Airport Development Evaluation

This task will involve the preparation of airport and terminal area alternatives, and a potential development plan for the overall Airport. This effort will consist of the following subtasks.

Subtask 2.1 – Mapping/Photography
The project team will obtain digital aerial imagery (i.e., orthophotos) of the Airport and surrounding area from the State of Connecticut and/or the Town (if available). The imagery will be used to generate an illustration of the existing airport layout and other illustrations for the study report. Mapping products will be prepared using CADD and/or GIS software.

Subtask 2.2 – Airport Activity Forecasts and Airport Role
The approach to this task involves using existing airport forecasts prepared by ConnDOT and FAA, with minor updates and refinements based on current conditions and study findings as well as defining the role of the airport within the overall airport system. The 2006 Connecticut Statewide Airport System Plan (SASP) and FAA Terminal Area Forecast contain activity and based aircraft forecasts for Ellington Airport. The project team will review these documents, and through discussions with airport management and key tenants, confirm current based aircraft and activity data. The design aircraft will be identified in order to determine the appropriate facility requirements for the development plan; Ellington Airport is anticipated to have a design aircraft of a single engine or light-twin.

The industry and local trends of the identified aviation activity market will be evaluated. The type of activity anticipated at Ellington is exclusively general aviation, including recreational pilots, helicopters, flight training, and business travel. This section will include a brief description of the feasibility of Very Light Jets (VLJs) or other small business jets operating at Ellington.

The future airport activity levels will determine the need for the Airport, its facility requirements, as well as anticipated revenues and expenses. The aviation forecasts will be directly used in developing the capital improvement plan and financial feasibility analysis. The forecasts will be coordinated with ConnDOT and FAA.

Subtask 2.3 – Airport Development Plan
Based on the efforts of the previous tasks, a generalized development plan will be prepared for the Airport. The plan will include an initial review of runway alternatives and discussions with the Town, Airport users, ConnDOT, and FAA. The anticipated review will include:

- Existing Conditions – Baseline (1,800' Runway)
- Extension to 2,500 foot Runway
- Extension to 3,200 foot Runway (or maximum feasible on existing alignment)
- Runway reorientation on the existing airport property

A preliminary noise analysis, utilizing the FAA's Integrated Noise Modeling 7.0 (INM) software, will be completed for each alternative to determine the effects on the local community. The noise

analysis will incorporate helicopter and parachute activity. Typical flight patterns of fixed-wing aircraft, helicopters, and sky diving operations will be necessary for this task.

CHA will prepare a "grid point" analysis with 12 sample locations surrounding the airport. The locations will be based on documented noise complaints (if any), the location of noise sensitive facilities (e.g., schools), and existing and future residential development.

These specific noise metrics to be evaluated include:

- Day-Night Average Noise Level (DNL) – Total accumulation of aircraft noise spread out uniformly throughout the day.
- Sound Exposure Level (SEL) – Total sound energy of an individual noise event, incorporating intensity, frequency, and duration.

The current 1,800 foot long runway is second shortest in the state. Thus, it is likely that a longer runway would be needed to attract additional use and generate revenue. Other facilities such as hangars for the storage of aircraft, paved tiedowns may be considered. Each facility will increase airport revenue, but also increases costs.

The ultimate development plan will be based on the needs of the design aircraft and ARC, and will depict potential short and long term airport related improvements and projects, such as the following:

- Additional paved apron for aircraft tiedowns
- The location and layout of additional hangars and buildings
- Upgrades or relocation of existing facilities to address FAA design standards
- Runway/taxiway modifications, extensions
- Existing facilities to be demolished/removed
- Tree clearing for airspace obstruction purposes
- Potential property to be acquired
- Fencing or other security requirements

The development plan may include facilities recommended by the current airport owner, Fixed Based Operators (FBO), and others, and/or facilities that are deemed necessary by the project team. The generalized recommended development plan will be provided in coordination with the Town.

Task 3 – Airport Capital Improvement Plan (ACIP)

The project team will combine the findings of the tasks above to develop a preliminary short and long term ACIP for the Airport. In coordination with the Town, ConnDOT, and FAA, recommended airport improvements will be prioritized. Recommended projects may include airfield improvements (taxiways, runway lights, etc.), pavement rehabilitation, and new hangars and buildings. The ACIP will include both publicly and privately funded projects.

Each project will be incorporated into the ACIP for the short (1 to 5 years), intermediate (5 to 10 years), and long term (11 to 20 year) planning periods. Planning level cost estimates for the

recommended projects will be generated for each of the planning periods. The ACIP will identify and briefly discuss the anticipated funding sources available to Ellington Airport if it was purchased by the Town and determine the percentage of funding for each project from these sources. Potential funding sources include:

- FAA Airport Improvement Program (AIP)
    - Discretionary/State Apportionment
    - Non Primary Entitlements
- State/ConnDOT matching funds
- Town of Ellington
- Private (FBO, tenant/lease, etc.)

Comments on the ACIP will be requested from ConnDOT and FAA prior to its use in the financial feasibility analysis.

Task 4 – Financial Feasibility Analysis of Airport Ownership

This task will involve a critical evaluation of the potential future revenues and expenses associated with the municipal ownership of the Airport. The task will result in a determination of whether the municipal purchase of the Airport is in the best interest of the Town and community from a financial standpoint. The effort will consist of the subtasks below.

Subtask 4.1 – Municipal Financial Review
This subtask will involve a review of existing Town documentation to determine the financial capability of the Town of Ellington to integrate the Airport as a potential municipal facility. The project team will meet with the Town Finance Department to collect available data to determine the following:

- Existing tax base structure
- Town revenue and expenditure trends (past three to five years)
- Debt service and tax rate trends
- Bonding capacity
- Financing and management of existing Town facilities

Subtask 4.2 – Airport Financial Review
Based on meetings with the current airport owner and tenants, the project team will obtain the following information:

- Current annual operating and capital costs associated with owning the Airport
- Revenue trends over the past three to five years (including fuel flowage estimates)
- Current owner's funding/history of capital projects
- Tenant mix and market share
- Tax payments and liability

The project team will also consider how municipal ownership of the Airport might change the financial structure of the facility, including possible changes in revenues (due to loss or gain of tenants, changes in operating costs and revenues, etc.). Completion of this subtask will require access to airport owner's financial information.

Subtask 4.3 – Airport Market Conditions

This task will review the current market conditions for airport facilities and services within the Greater Hartford Region. The project team will identify existing alternative (or competing) airports. For these airports, the team will identify the demand for and supply of aircraft tiedowns and hangar space, airport user/tenant requirements, and regional employment and business trends. This information will be collected through contact with airport managers and/or municipal officials, aircraft sales and registration data, and other sources. Based on the information obtained from the locally competitive set of facilities, the review will estimate the likely demand for future airport facilities and services, as well as the anticipated fees and charges that the market will support.

Subtask 4.4 – Financial Feasibility Analysis

Based on the findings of Subtasks above, the project team will develop a 10 year forecast of airport revenues, expenses, and capital costs to determine the likely net income of the Airport under Town ownership. This analysis will incorporate the findings of the previous tasks that will include various operational alternatives and market forecasts. The impact of potential tax revenue loss to the Town as a result of obtaining public ownership will also be incorporated into the analysis.

This subtask will be a key component of the study as it will demonstrate the likelihood of the Airport to be financially self sufficient. The listing below depicts the anticipated airport revenue and expense forecast categories for 10 years.

Airport Operating Revenues	Airport Operating Expenditures
• Tiedown Fees	• Electricity
• T-Hangars (currently none)	• Insurance
• Other Hangars	• Common Area Maintenance
• Office(s)/Terminal	• Building Maintenance
• Fuel Flowage Fees	• Legal/Professional Services
	• Capital Projects (annual average)

The forecast of airport revenues and expenses will document a year to year financial net balance, as well as a cumulated balance, over the forecast period. The analysis will clearly identify the future financial picture of the Airport under Town ownership. Overall, the financial analysis will provide the following data:

- Net Cash Flow – Annual
- Lost Tax Levy – Annual
- Net Balance – Annual
- Cumulative Net Balance

The evaluation not only needs to determine if future airport revenues are likely to exceed expenses, but also if a positive revenue balance is demonstrated after the impact of lost property tax revenue is considered.

As any financial analysis requires stated assumptions, our approach includes the evaluation of up to three different financial scenarios or pro formas. The various scenarios will each include the same evaluation methodology, but will incorporate different assumptions that impact airport cash flow. The assumptions may include, but are not limited to the following:

- The number of future based aircraft and airport businesses (affects tenant rents and fuel sales)
- The development of additional hangars and tiedowns
- Variations in the Airport Capital Improvement Plan (variations in runway lengths and recommended projects)
- The specific tax parcels and/or buildings to be acquired (and then taken off the tax role)

The three financial scenarios may include a baseline or status quo alternative, an aggressive development scenario, or any combination thereof.

Finally, note that the one time cost of airport property acquisition can be discussed as a separate item in the financial feasibility analysis. This cost does not reoccur and various funding opportunities for the initial property acquisition will be addressed. The goal will be to minimize acquisition costs to the Town of Ellington to the greatest extent possible.

The acquisition cost will be estimated from assessment data.

Task 5 – Airport Economic Impact Analysis

This task will involve an economic impact assessment of the Airport based on the findings of previous tasks, socioeconomic and market trends of the region, and qualitative information sources. The effort will result in an estimation and narrative discussion of the direct and indirect economic and social impacts of the Airport on the Town, region and state.

The project team will analyze secondary published data sources, as well as interview the following entities to collect aviation dependent economic activity data:

- Aviation dependent businesses at the Ellington Airport
- Aviation dependent businesses located off the airport property (if any)
- Businesses that use the Airport as a regular part of their operation
- Owners of aircraft based at the Airport (assumes contact information can be obtained from the airport operator or registration records)
- Local and regional airport supporters (educational, recreational, etc.)
- Local and regional business development agencies/organizations

Where available, economic information on the amount of employment and revenue (wages, spending, etc.) that is directly (or indirectly) attributed to the Airport will be calculated. The task will enable a comparison of the airport and non-airport development scenario. The reader will be cautioned that the evaluation is based on the stated set of assumptions, and that variation in actual outcome will affect the conclusions.

Task 6 – Preliminary Airport Redevelopment Analysis

This task will involve a brief investigation of the redevelopment of the airport into a three alternative uses: residential development, industrial park, and commercial/office park. The property is currently zoned for industrial use, is adjacent to industrial facilities along Route 83, and the Town has recently expanded sanitary sewer lines that could support addition development. As such, this task will investigate the feasibility of redeveloping the airport property. Task activities for each use will include:

- Analysis of local and regional employment and business establishment trends.
- Analysis of regional market conditions of light industrial, office, industrial, and residential.
- Identify an estimated cost to convert the airport property and prepare it for the specified uses (e.g., extending water and sewer lines, and other infrastructure).
- Evaluate the current and long term market for the specified development in the Town and at the airport site. Establish an estimated absorption period.
- Prepare a basic site plan and development program
- Evaluate the likely financial outcome for taxes generated, employment, etc. based on estimated absorption period.

The project team will prepare a market analysis using socioeconomic, demographic, and related data from published sources, supplemented by primary market research. The team will collect and analyze various market conditions and parameters, including land values, development activity, rent/sales levels, and demand indicators. The analysis will then serve as a basis for estimating the development potential (i.e., absorption estimates) and market value of the site under the specified uses.

Note that this task will be highly generalized and used for comparitve purposes to the airport's development. A detailed redevelopment evaluation is beyond the scope of this study.

Task 7 – Airport Management/Ownership Options

Other ownership options for the retention of the Ellington Airport as a public use airport will be briefly described, including the potential advantages, disadvantages, and feasibility of each option. The options may include the following:

- ConnDOT ownership
- Joint municipal or regional airport authority ownership
- Sale to a different private operator
- Town acquisition and operation

- Town acquisition with leased operation/contract management

This task will also include identifying potential FBO operators by meeting with the current tenants to determine their interest and capability of providing these services, as well as contacting several existing FBO's within the State of Connecticut and placing an advertisement in an appropriate publication to identify potential interest.

Task 8 – Recommendations & Implementation Plan

The efforts of Tasks 1 through 7 will be incorporated into an overall study finding, with a potential list of implementation steps, acquisition conditions, and timeline. The implementation plan may include a need for further analysis. This brief section is intended to provide a "checklist" of requirements or list of "action steps" for the potential acquisition of the Airport. If airport acquisition is not recommended, a summary of the reasons will be provided.

Task 9 – Public Outreach & Coordination

The public outreach program will be coordinated with the Town of Ellington, ConnDOT, and FAA. Due to the unique circumstances of this study, we suggest that study reports and documents be posted on the Town's website with documents provided by CHA.

The public outreach program should also include public and "committee" meetings. For this study, we recommend establishing a temporary Advisory Committee made up of Town, EDC, State, and FAA personnel, the airport owner, key airport users, business groups, area residents, and local planning officials.

Recommended meetings include the following:

- Advisory Committee Meeting #1
- Advisory Committee Meeting #2
- Advisory Committee Meeting #3
- Board of Selectman Meeting #1
- Board of Selectman Meeting #2
- Public Information Meeting #1

CHA will prepare an agenda, presentation, and meeting summary for all project meetings, as well as all study reports and documents (draft and final).

CHA will deliver 20 copies of both the draft and final reports, and also provide copies directly to FAA, ConnDOT, and the airport owner. Digital copies on CD-ROM will also be provided in PDF format.